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ABSTRACT

This book provides an account of life in the inner city from World War II to the present. Poor, jobless, and racially outcast young black people are economically and socially excluded from the American mainstream. To compensate for this, inner-city children turn to American traditions of consumerism and violence. Buying into the implicit message behind advertising, these children believe that those who cannot afford prestigious commodities are inferior. The book identifies the sources of violence and despair among young people in America's inner-city by showing how economic transformation has interacted with the history of racism. It also points out that the glorification of violence on television and in movies spawns violent values in inner-city neighborhoods, that old Christian traditions of discipline tend to fuel family violence, and that stereotyping blacks as inherently violent helps to legitimate inner city aggression. The book agrees with the many social scientists who contend that disappearing economic opportunities and racial exclusion explain much about the tragedy of inner-city life, and offers suggestions for what efforts all Americans must make to reverse the historical tide and build a future for poor black children. Contains an index and an appendix of statistical tables. (GLR)

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